

Kim Stefansson
Escambia County School District
Public Relations Coordinator
kstefansson@ecsdfi.us
850-393-0539 (Cell)

ECSD NEWS RELEASE

August 4, 2020

ECSD (FLA) School Counselor Honored by Reinvented Magazine Named a Top Four Educator

Reinvented Magazine recently surprised an Escambia County School District School Counselor with the honor of naming her a top four finalist for their Educator of the Year Award! Patricia Swanz-Reiners was nominated by Angela Cleveland, the Director of NCWIT (National Center for Women & Information Technology) Counselors for Computing Program, who she met when she attended NMSI's annual conference last summer.

NMSI is the National Math and Science Initiative, and ECSD has been an NMSI school district for several years. Involvement includes training for teachers, counselors, and administration and the opportunity to attend various conferences. Swanz-Reiners is an ECSD School Counselor and she is assigned to Lipscomb Elementary School. Her participation in last year's NMSI conference built relationships that provided the opportunity to present to various groups. She became a Counselor Consultant with Counselors for Computing and has been presenting virtually in several states since the pandemic closed schools in the spring.

"Swanz-Reiners was the counselor representative on the ECSD team last year and it was the initial year that NMSI offered a week on coding and computer science. We spent the week in sessions specific to our areas and NCWIT was the leader in the group for counselors. Pati has stayed involved with her NCWIT contacts and she traveled to speak at events and she has presented at a couple of NCWIT virtual events," explained Lauren Thurman from ECSD's Instructional Technology Professional Development Department.

“Part of my presentation to other school counselors includes talking about the Grant for Excellence which Lipscomb received from the Escambia County Public Schools Foundation for a program we call, *Google Expedition: Voyage into the Unknown*,” said Swanz-Reiners. She worked with Thurman to present the Expedition to Lipscomb’s students last year.

“Google Expedition incorporates both virtual and augmented reality and challenges students to not only be consumers of technology, but also producers of technology. By introducing new opportunities that engage our students in cutting edge technology, we are leveling the educational playing field for all students. We are providing equity in the classroom regardless of the student’s socioeconomic status, race, or gender.”

When Swanz-Reiners heard that she was nominated for Reinvention Magazine’s honor, for her work for being a leader in modeling elementary engagement in computer science learning opportunities, her reaction was, “Being recognized as a finalist gives me the opportunity to highlight the importance of the work I am doing in my school, that many of us are doing in our school district, and the work I am doing with so many other school counselors.”

Reinvented Magazine has a single mission in mind, she explained. Their mission is to reinvent the general perception of women in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) while inspiring interest in STEM for young women worldwide. “The Educator of the Year award recognizes the critical role that K-12 educators have in sparking an early interest in STEM and opening opportunities for young people, especially those underrepresented in the field,” Swanz-Reiners said.

“Being selected as one of 20 finalists from around the world is an honor that elevates the role of educators who are impacting change in their sphere of influence and serving as a role model of how we can integrate inclusive strategies to engage more students in STEM with creativity, advocacy, and collaboration,” explained Swanz-Reiners. “Finding out I was in the top four finalists was so exciting! It truly is an honor to be among amazing women who are doing great things in the world and making it a better place for all of our students, especially our girls. It was thrilling.”

Websites to learn more: NMSI: www.nms.org and NCWIT at www.ncwit.org
Reinvented Magazine: <https://www.reinventedmagazine.com/>

For more information about the Escambia County School District, visit ECSD's web page at www.escambiaschools.org. Like ECSD on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ecsdfl. To read about recent ECSD news and events or explore the photo albums and videos, go to Escambia Schools Public Relations on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ecsd.public. Media queries about Escambia County School District topics should be directed to Kim Stefansson, at 850-393-0539 or kstefansson@ecsdfl.us.
ECSD prc 08042020